CLAIMS

1. A valve mechanism including a movable closure member, means for resiliently biasing the movable member towards a first position, and linkage means for retaining the movable member in a second position, the linkage means including a chemically sensitive device which is arranged to release in the presence of a contaminant.

2. A valve mechanism according to claim 1 in which the first position is a closed position and the second position is an open position.

3. A valve mechanism according to claim 1 in which the chemically sensitive device comprises an elongate member having at least one end whose surface is frictionally engaged by a co-operating member of the mechanism, and is adapted to be chemically degraded by the contaminant so that the frictional engagement is lost.

4. A valve mechanism according to claim 2 in which the movable closure member comprises a butterfly which is rotatably mounted in a conduit so a to close the conduit when the chemically sensitive device is activated.

5. A valve mechanism according to claim 4 in which the linkage means comprises a crank connected to the rotatable mountings of the butterfly, and a tension spring connecting the crank arm to a fixed point so as to bias it to the closed position, the chemically sensitive device being arranged to retain the crank in the open position.

6. A valve mechanism according to claim 4 in which the chemically sensitive device comprises an elongate member having end caps which are an interference fit on each end, one of which connects it to the crank, so that the end cap is released when the surface of the chemically sensitive member is degraded by the contaminant.